

Brookline Preservation Commission Demolition Application Report

Address: 102 Fernwood Road

Petitioner: 102 Fernwood Trust

Building type: House

National Register Listing (if Applicable): Fernwood property



Historical/Architectural Significance:

The house at 102 Fernwood Road was permitted to be built in 1980 based on plans by noted modernist architect Ira Rakatansky. Rakatansky studied with Marcel Breuer and Walter Gropius at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and became an early practitioner of modernism in New England. His practice was based from his studio on Meeting Street in Providence, Rhode Island. The owner of the house was Enid M. Starr, an attorney at the time at the Boston firm Barron and Stadfeld.

Rakatansky's designs are admired for their geometry and crisp lines and for the spatial organization that is often termed rational. The house at Fernwood Road dates from the architect's mid-career. The framing elements were provided by TJI Beam Company. Exterior walls are a light yellow brick. Aside from the covered entry and front-facing garage, another character-defining feature of the facade is the broken gable pediment, perhaps a post-modern wink to Philip Johnson, whose design for the AT&T building in NYC dates from the same years.



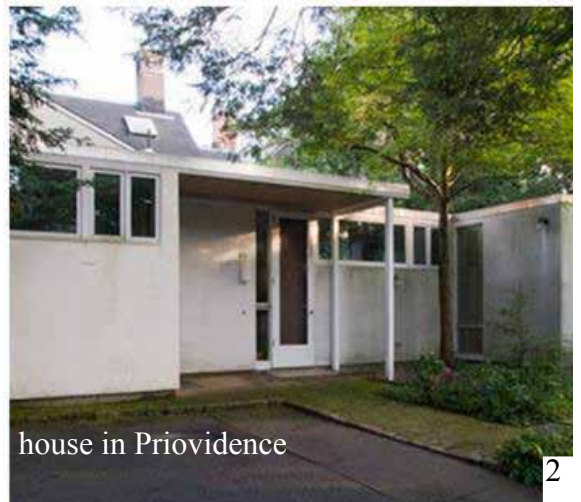
An earlier Rakatansky house

The house was built on the historic 'Fernwood' estate, listed on the National Register in 1985 for the significance of the landscape, designed by the Olmsted Brothers, and for two estate buildings designed in 1909 and 1910 by architect Charles Patch for owner Alfred Douglas.

Douglas had acquired a very large land holding from the Gardiner family and constructed several estate buildings. The property changed hands several times from the 1930s until c. 1960, when Fernwood Road, a private way, was laid out to provide access to large house lots in a subdivision of the former estate property.



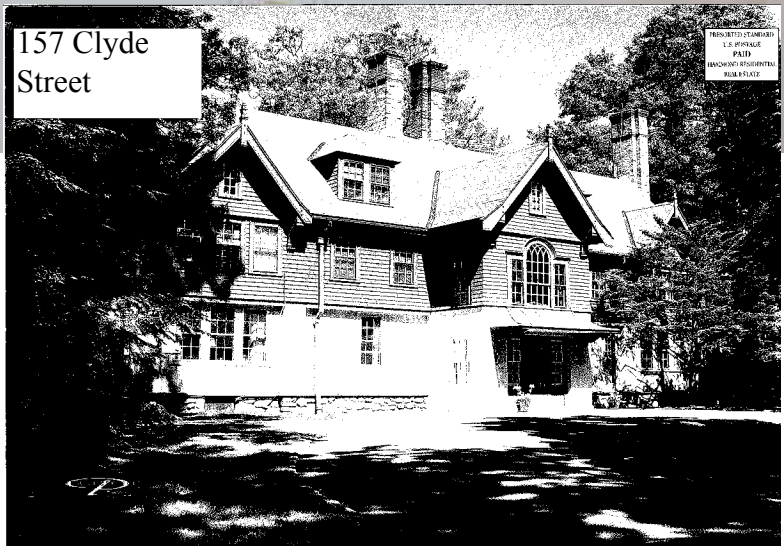
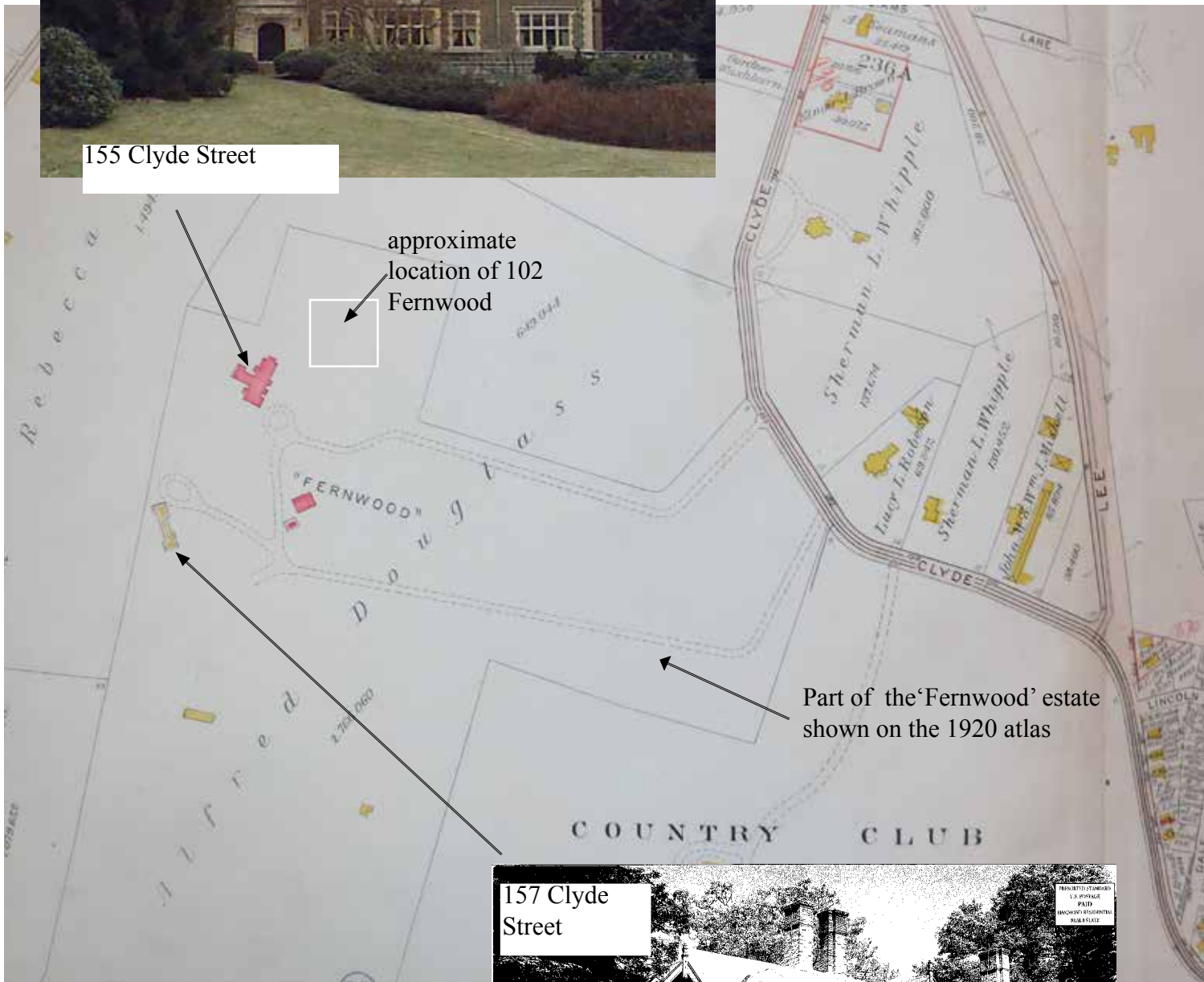
The architect's



house in Providence



155 Clyde Street



157 Clyde Street



Setting and massing

The house at 102 Fernwood Road meets the following criterion for an initial determination of significance:

- a. The building is listed or is within an area listed in the National or State Register of Historic Places.

The house retains its integrity in terms of its location setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. It is a fine example of late period modernist design. Although the building is not yet 50 years old, it was designed by an architect whose oeuvre has recently been the subject of considerable attention.